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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: TALKING WITH UN ABOUT FIXING UNAMI

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro Wolff for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: During an April 26 meeting with UN Under Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe, Ambassador Wolff raised U.S.

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concerns about UNAMI, including the human rights report on Iraq released April 25 and the mission's credibility problem with the government of Iraq. Pascoe admitted "we have a problem" with UNAMI, and committed to working closely with the USG to revise the mission's mandate and to identify a suitable successor to current SRSG Ashraf Qazi -- one who can work closely with Ambassador Crocker and the Iraqis. USUN also met April 25 with deputy SRSG Michael von der Schulenburg, who is visiting New York to participate in an internal UN meeting April 27 to discuss Iraq policy. Schulenburg said he warned Qazi that the human rights report would antagonize "a paranoid Iraq government under siege," and argued that UNAMI lacks a proper vision of its role. He recommended that UNAMI focus on national reconciliation (which he defines as including continued support for constitutional reform and elections), institutional development, mediation on Kirkuk, and contact work in the region. End Summary.

12. (C) Amb Wolff met privately with DPA USYG Pascoe April 26 to express USG concerns about UNAMI's handling of the mission's most recent human rights report, released April 25.

(As a special political mission, UNAMI falls under the UN's Department of Political Affairs.) Amb Wolff said important sections of the report are factually inaccurate, and the polemical tone is inconsistent with standard UN practice. Moreover, UNAMI failed to engage seriously with the GOI and the USG prior to the report's release. The UN did not consult adequately and resisted efforts to address the report's deficiencies. This episode would only worsen the mission's credibility problem with the GOI, and make it more difficult to address troubling GOI practices. Amb Wolff advised that the UN must correct the perception of UNAMI's pro-Sunni bias in order for the mission to play an effective role in Iraq.

13. (C) Amb Wolff also shared with Pascoe USG concerns about reports that UNAMI is prepared to recommend to UN management that the mission involve itself in policy areas outside its current mandate. Deputy SRSG Schulenberg told USUN April 25 that UNAMI would like to engage in dialogue with armed Sunni Arab opposition groups based outside of Iraq. He said UNAMI also wants to take on a role in resolving the status of Kirkuk. Amb Wolff advised Pascoe that the GOI would not welcome or support a UNAMI role in negotiating with Iraqi Sunni Arabs. While a UNAMI role in Kirkuk might prove helpful, key stakeholders such as the GOI, the Kurds, and Turkey would first need to gain confidence in UNAMI. Amb Wolff urged Pascoe to consult closely with the USG on changes to UNAMI's mandate, reminding him that UNAMI should not

neglect its current tasks, including helping the Iraqis hold provincial elections.

¶4. (C) Pascoe admitted "we have a problem" with UNAMI. He agreed that the UN needed to identify a replacement for Ashraf Qazi (whose contract expires in August), and reported that the GOI had requested his successor not be a Muslim because of sectarian sensitivities. Pascoe agreed that in order for UNAMI to succeed it needed to have the confidence of the GOI and Ambassador Crocker, and committed to working closely with the USG to revise UNAMI's mandate and appoint new personnel. Pascoe also said he intended to make related personnel changes in his office in New York.

¶5. (C) Separately, USUN met April 25 with deputy SRSG Michael von der Schulenburg, who was called to New York to participate in an internal UN policy meeting on Iraq scheduled for April 27. Schulenburg said UNAMI staffer Haniyah Mutfti had drafted the human rights report. He said Mufti is a Sunni Arab Jordanian national married to an Iraqi and that she has a well-known political bias against the Shia. He claimed he had warned Qazi that the report would be rejected by the GOI, which he described as a paranoid government under siege. He noted that UNAMI's mandate is to support the GOI in the area of human rights, and argued the report failed in that regard.

¶6. (C) Schulenburg said he was in an awkward position, because he was supposed to represent UNAMI in the internal UN policy meeting to discuss a proposal for UNAMI to engage armed Sunni Arab groups outside Iraq, and to play a role in resolving Kirkuk's status. But Schulenburg said the UN lacked the capacity to play a role in negotiating with Iraq's Sunni Arab community, noting that in order to negotiate you needed leverage, which he said UNAMI did not have. He also suggested that the GOI would rightfully oppose any UNAMI role with Sunni Arabs, given the mission's perceived bias. He

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added that UNAMI must correct this perception before it can engage successfully in Iraq. While he believes the UN could play a helpful role in Kirkuk, the UNAMI proposal in this area did not reflect his thinking, including the results of his recent trip to Irbil. (Note: He shared several reports, including one on Kirkuk, which USUN has e-mailed to Embassy Baghdad. End Note.)

¶7. (C) Schulenburg argued UNAMI needed new leadership, a revised role, and more logistical support (e.g., housing, transport). In terms of a revised mandate, he believes UNAMI should focus on national reconciliation, which he defines as including constitutional reform and elections; institutional development; mediation on Kirkuk; and a contact role in the region. On the latter point, he suggested the UN could provide the framework for contact among key countries.

WOLFF